

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 12-24 remain pending in this patent application. Claims 8-10, drawn to a non-elected species, stand withdrawn from consideration under 37 CFR § 1.142(b).

In this paper, claims 1-3 and 12 have been amended. Support for the amendments to these claims can be found in original claim 12.

PRIOR ART REJECTION I

Claims 1-7, 16-20 and 24 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6623378 B2 (Beach et al.) in view of US 6645086 B1 (Chen), US 6332847 B2 (Murphy et al.) and US 1269745 (Robertson). Applicant traverses this rejection.

In this paper Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 2, 3 to recite the metal component as being provided along a front end of the sole plate with a continuous or discontinuous slot. Claim 12 has been similarly amended to recite the metal component as being provided along a front end of the sole plate with a single continuous slot or alternatively a plurality of slots in a single row. This subject matter was recited in earlier iterations of claim 12 and was recognized by the Examiner as allowable in Office Actions dated April 20, 2006, September 27, 2006 and December 5, 2007. In view of the amendments to claims 1-3 made herein, Applicant submits that claims 1-3 and dependent claims 4-7, 16-20 and 24 recite allowable subject matter.

In view of the foregoing observations, Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn and that claims 1-7, 16-20 and 24 be recognized as allowable.

PRIOR ART REJECTION II

Claims 13-15 and 21-23 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beach et al. in view of Chen, Murphy et al. and Robertson and further in view of JP 9-253242 (JP '242). Applicant traverses this rejection.

As noted above, independent claims 1-3 and 12 have been amended to recite subject matter that has been recognized as allowable by the Examiner. In view of the amendments to

claims 1-3 and 12 made herein, Applicant submits that dependent claims 13-15 and 21-23 recite allowable subject matter.

In view of the foregoing observations, Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn and that claims 13-15 and 21-23 be recognized as allowable.

PRIOR ART REJECTION III

Claims 12 and 17-19 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beach et al. in view of JP 6-190088 (JP '088). Applicant traverses this rejection.

As noted above, independent claims 3 and 12 have been amended to recite subject matter that has been recognized as allowable by the Examiner. In view of the amendments to claims 3 and 12 made herein, Applicant submits that claim 12 and dependent claims 17-19 recite allowable subject matter.

In view of the foregoing observations, Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn and that claims 12 and 17-19 be recognized as allowable.

PRIOR ART REJECTION IV

Claims 21-23 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beach et al. in view of JP '088 and further in view of JP '242. Applicant traverses this rejection insofar as it might be deemed applicable to any of claims 21-23 as now presented.

As noted above, independent claims 3 and 12 have been amended to recite subject matter that has been recognized as allowable by the Examiner. In view of the amendments to claims 3 and 12 made herein, Applicant submits that dependent claims 21-23 recite allowable subject matter.

In view of the foregoing observations, Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn and that claims 21-23 be recognized as allowable.

CLAIMS TO NON-ELECTED EMBODIMENTS

In the discussions above, Applicant has shown that claims 1-7 and 12-24 are allowable. Claim 1 is generic to the non-elected species illustrated in Figs. 9 and 10 and the species illustrated in Fig. 12. Claims 2 and 3 are generic to all of the species identified by the Examiner in the Requirement for Restriction dated July 20, 2005. In view of the allowability of claims 1, 2

and 3, Applicant submits that claims 8-10 should now be recognized as allowable along with their parent claims under 37 CFR § 1.141(a).

CONCLUSION

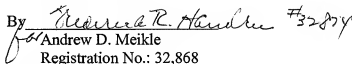
In view of the amendments, observations and arguments presented herein, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections stated in the outstanding Office Action and recognize all of the pending claims as allowable.

If unresolved matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Frederick R. Handren, Reg. No. 32,874, at the telephone number provided below, so that these matters can be addressed and resolved expeditiously.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.147; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By  #32874
for Andrew D. Meikle
Registration No.: 32,868
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicant